MEMORANDUM

To: Heidi Miksch

From: Paul Huey

Date: December 23, 2003

Subject: State Capitol Finial

I briefly took a look at some of the available records to identify the individuals whose names are inscribed on the finial that you are conserving. The names are "W Brown" with the date August 19, 1891, "R Bewsher" with the same date, and "M Grogan" with no date.

R. Bewsher was Richard Bewsher, a roofer. He was born in England either in 1848 or in October 1850, a grandson probably of John O. Bewsher, a shoemaker who was in Albany by 1858. In that year John O. Bewsher acquired from the Reformed Dutch Church two lots on the north side of Sherman (Sand) Street in Albany, between Lark Street and Henry Johnson Boulevard (Knox Street). The 1859 directory lists John Bewsher as a shoemaker at 31 Sherman (Sand) Street, with William Bewsher, a painter, as his neighbor at 37 Sherman Street. William Bewsher, born in England in March 1836, came to the United States in 1845 or 1846. He may have been the son of John O. Bewsher and father of Richard, though the records are contradictory. John O. Bewsher, according to the 1860 census for Albany, was born in England about 1805, and 10-year-old Richard was a member of his household, along with Richard's 12-year-old brother Joseph and a 16-year-old sister Janet.

While the 1860 census does not list William Bewsher, William is listed in Albany in the 1870 census as a painter. His family included only his 12-year-old son William, infant son Edward, and his New York-born wife, Fannie. Later records indicate Fannie was born in France, and, strangely, John O. Bewsher is not listed in the 1870 census. But the 1870 Albany city directory lists him as a maker of boots and shoes and still living apparently where he was in 1859, now identified as 45 Sherman Street. He may have had a shop on Washington Avenue, since Boyd's New York State business directory for New York State in 1870 lists him as a bootmaker at 91 Washington Avenue. Also, the 1876 Albany city directory lists both William and John O. Bewsher. William was a painter living on Judson Street near Clinton Avenue. John O. Bewsher, the shoemaker, was at 45 Sherman Street. This was several blocks south of William's house in the area north of Washington Park. With John O. Bewsher at 45 Sherman Street still lived Richard Bewsher, listed now as a tinsmith. Joseph Bewsher, also a tinsmith, also lived there. The 1876 Hopkins Albany atlas, in fact, shows J.W. Bewsher as occupant or owner of two lots, 45 and 47 Sherman Street, located at the northeast corner of Sherman Street and Knox Street, just one block north of Clinton Avenue on the east side of present Henry Johnson Boulevard.

Richard Bewsher was apparently missed by the 1880 census, but he is in the 1881 Albany directory. He was listed as a tinsmith living at 3 Knox Street. Joseph, still a tinsmith, still boarded at nearby 45 Sherman Street. Joseph W. Bewsher inherited John O. Bewsher's property on the north side of Sherman Street on September 16, 1890, following John's death. On September 19, 1890, Joseph conveyed to Richard Bewsher part of the property, a lot on the north side of Sherman Street 34 feet east of the corner with Knox Street. This would have been 45 Sherman Street, and it must have become Richard Bewsher's home in 1890.

The 1900 census clearly lists Richard Bewsher with his occupation as a roofer. With him lived his Scottish-born wife, Sarah, a son, and four daughters. His son was John O. Bewsher, born in 1877. His daughters were Jenny born in 1884, Josephine born in 1887, Edith born in 1889, and Mariea born in 1894 or 1895. By 1920, the census shows that only his son and daughter, John and Mariea, were still living with 69-year-old Richard Bewsher. His occupation in 1920 was still listed as roofer, and he was employed by the State. His son John was a carpenter working for the railroad. By 1924, William Bewsher, the painter and probably the father of

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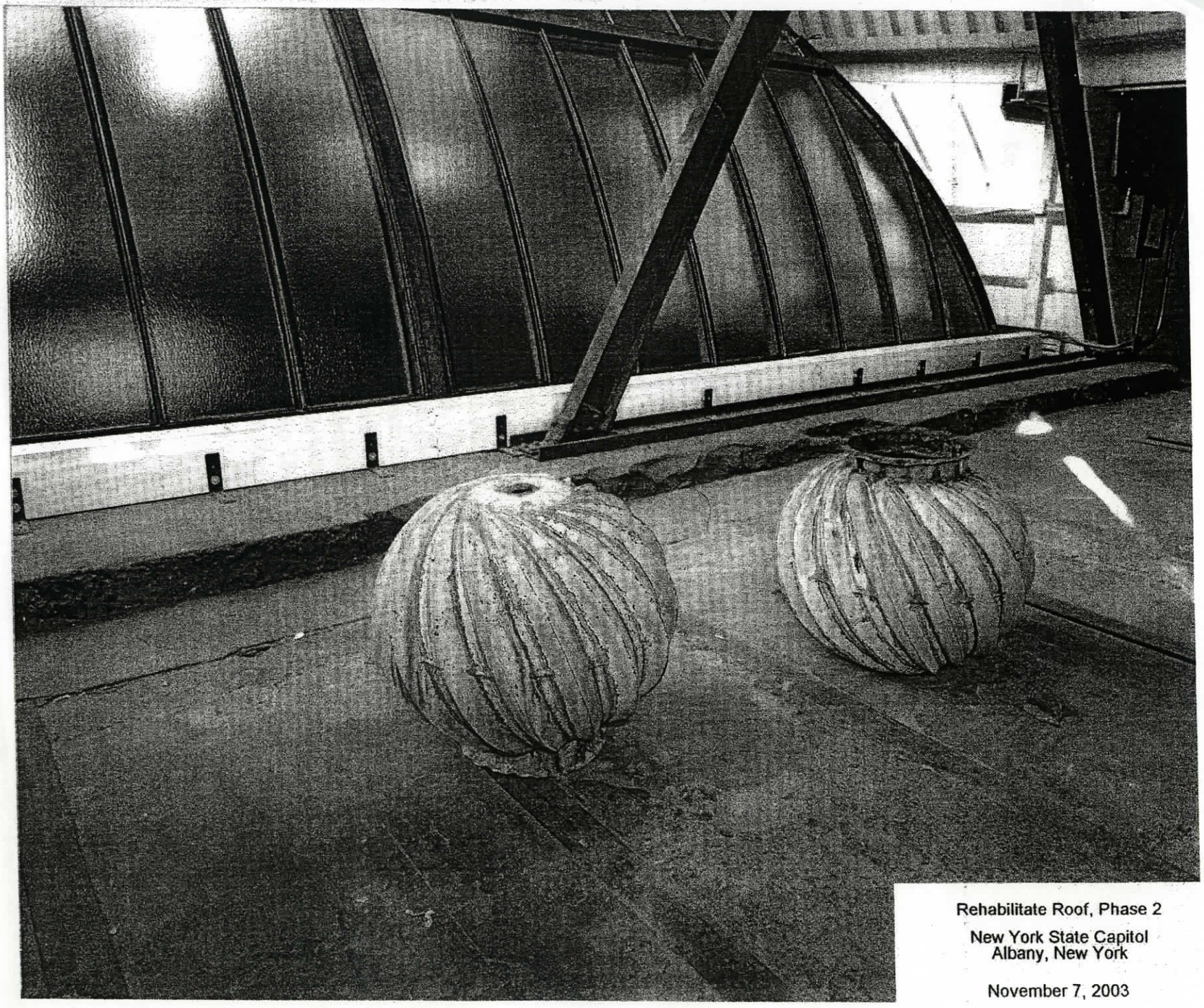
Richard, had died, and William's widow, Fannie, died on November 11, 1924. The 1925 directory, however, shows Richard as a roofer still living at 45 Sherman Street with his daughter Mariea and son John O., a carpenter. Mariea Bewsher apparently never married and lived her entire life in Albany. She died in November 1967, according to Social Security records.

The other names on the finial are much more difficult to trace. The 1876 Albany directory lists a Michael Grogan, laborer, boarding at the rear of 11 Van Tromp Street and a Michael Grogan, mason, living at 145 Canal Street (Sheridan Avenue). The 1880 census, however, lists Michael Grogan, a tinsmith, age 28, living in the 7th Ward in Albany with his parents, brothers, and sisters. His parents were John and Ellen Grogan, both born in Ireland and both age 45. Michael was the oldest child and was born in New York, which means that his parents came to America in 1852 or earlier. The Albany County naturalization records list John Grogan living in Cohoes when he was naturalized on October 26, 1860. The 1881 Albany directory has Michael Grogan, laborer, boarding at 16 Monroe Street and Michael Grogan, the tinsmith, boarding at 4 Eagle Street.

Of W. Brown, little has been be determined. The 1920 census for Albany has a William D. Brown, age 31, listed as a roofer living with his wife in the 2nd Ward. According to the 1925 Albany directory, the home of William D. Brown, roofer, was at 88 South Hawk Street. If William D. Brown was 31 years old in 1920, he could not possibly have been the roofer working on the State Capitol. Maybe there was some family connection, however. This William D. Brown may have been a son of Alonzo W. Brown, born on December 10, 1887, in Dutchess County.



Rehabilitate Roof, Phase 2

New York State Capitol
Albany, New York

November 7, 2003

additional photography of writing on the interior surface: